

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND FAMILIARIZATION TRAVEL:
SUE FORD PATRICK AND R. KOTT

REF: (A) LOME 1522 NOTAL (B) STATE 138429 (NOTAL)

1. IN JULY 14 CALL ON MEA CHIEF OF PROTOCOL BALEWA, CHARGE
RAISED TRAVEL QUESTION, EMPHASIZED THE SERIOUS INCONVENIENCE OF
CONTINUING TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND DIFFICULTY OF EXPLAINING THESE
RESTRICTIONS TO DEPARTMENT. CHARGE CITED KOTT CASE AS MOST URGENT
BECAUSE LATTER ARRIVES JULY 19, AND HE URGED ONCE AGAIN THAT IT IS
VERY MUCH IN NIGERIAN INTEREST THAT KOTT HAVE A PROPER UNDER-
STANDING OF THE VASTNESS AND DIVERSITY OF NIGERIA BEFORE HE TAKES
UP HIS DUTIES ON THE DEPARTMENT'S NIGERIAN DESK. BALEWA ENTIRELY
AGREED AND SAID HE COULD ASSURE CHARGE THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM
WITH KOTT'S TRAVEL. IT WAS AGREED WE WILL SUBMIT FOLLOW-UP NOTE
WITH DETAILS OF KOTT'S ITINERARY IN NIGERIA, PEOPLE AND PLACES HE
WISHES TO SEE, ETC., FOR MINISTRY'S INFORMATION. COMMENT: DESPITE
LACK OF ENCOURAGING WORD ON OTHER TRAVEL (SEE PARAGRAPH 3 BELOW),
WE PLAN TO SUBMIT KOTT SCHEDULE WITH NAMED EMBOFFS (AND POSSIBLY
CONSULATE OFFICERS) ACCOMPANYING ON VARIOUS LEGS OF HIS TRIP.
THIS CAN BE JUSTIFIED AS NORMAL ESCORT FUNCTION AND HOPEFULLY
WILL HELP PRY OPEN THE DOOR FOR OTHER TRAVEL. END COMMENT.

2. CHARGE THEN RAISED QUESTION OF PATRICK ORIENTATION VISIT
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WHICH WAS SCRUBBED BECAUSE FMG WITHHELD PERMISSION FOR TRAVEL

OUTSIDE LAGOS. HE POINTED OUT PATRICK CASE IS IDENTICAL WITH KOTT AND U.S./NIGERIA WHOULD SHARE SAME INTEREST IN HER VISIT. AGAIN BALEWA AGREED. HE DID NOT GUARANTEE HER CASE WOULD BE APPROVED, BUT HE SUGGESTED WE RE-SUBMIT NOTE ON HER. IF DEPARTMENT CONFIRMS PATRICK COULD MAKE FAMILIARIZATION VISIT IN SEPTEMBER (PARA 2 STATE 138429), WE WILL FOLLOW UP ON THIS.

3. WITH REGARD TO TRAVEL IN GENERAL, CHARGE UNDERScoreD PERSONAL AND OPERATIONAL FRUSTRATION INVOLVED FOR ALL ELEMENTS OF MISSION, CITING AS EXAMPLE STYMIED ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL PLANS FOR ACTIVE TRADE PROMOTION PROGRAM THROUGHOUT NIGERIA. BALEWA SYMPATHIZED AND SAID HE HOPED THIS COULD BE CLEARED UP SOON, BUT HE WOULD OFFER NO ESTIMATE OF WHEN. HE REFERRED VAGUELY TO PROBLEM AS PERTAINING PRIMARILY TO CHIEFS OF MISSION: MEA WANTS TO ASSURE PROPER RECEPTION FOR THEM ON THEIR OFFICIAL CALLS OUTSIDE LAGOS AND WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT AND CLEAR INVITATIONS THEY RECEIVE TO SPEAK TO MISCELLANEOUS INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. CHARGE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO CITE EXTREME CONTRASTING CASE OF ASSISTANT INFORMATION OFFICER SUSAN STIRN WHO WAS REFUSED PERMISSION JULY 13 TO MAKE PRIVATE PLEASURE DRIVE WITH A VISITING FRIEND TO IBADAN/KADUNA/KANO AND MAIDUGURI NEXT WEEK. BALEWA HAD NO COMMENT TO OFFER EXCEPT THAT NEW REGULATIONS WOULD BE PROMULGATED TO MAKE ALL CLEAR AND MEA IS PRESSING FOR EARLY DECISION FROM HIGHER AUTHORITY. COMMENT: BALEWA LEFT IMPRESSION NEW REGULATIONS WOULD BE MORE SPECIFIC AND PERHAPS MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN BEFORE, "WHEN PRACTICE WAS SIMPLY TO NOTIFY MEA" OF INTENDED TRAVEL. FMG MAY BE CONTEMPLATING REQUIRING SPECIFIC PRIOR APPROVAL FOR TRAVEL.
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